

Characters

- SARITA: A spirited young woman; age range: 13-21.
- YEYE: Her friend and neighbor; age range: 13-21.
- FELA: Her mother; age range: 35-43.
- FERNANDO: Fela's tenant; age range: 60-68.
- JULIO: Sarita's lover; age range: 15-23.
- MARK: Sarita's husband; age range: 20-24.
- JUAN: A friend and drummer.

The set represents Fela's livingroom in New York's South Bronx. However, the proportions are not realistic. The ceiling is inordinately high. There are no windows except for a small one, ten feet high on each side wall. There are two doors in the back wall. In the livingroom there are an overstuffed couch, two overstuffed chairs, a coffee table, and two footstools on each side of the coffee table. The orchestra pit is behind the back wall. Seven feet above is an open recess or a rectangular cut-out on the back wall which is Sarita's kitchen. There is a kitchen table and two chairs. To the left on the livingroom back wall there is a window. There are three backdrops which are lowered in the course of the play. They are: the upper floors of the Empire State Building, a beach and the waitingroom of a mental hospital.

Act 1

Act 1, Scene 1: 1939 Fortune Telling

ACT ONE

Scene 1

1939--Fortune Telling

Fela's livingroom, Sarita is 13 years old. She sits to the right of the table. Yeye sits to the left. They both wear parochial school uniforms. Yeye holds a deck of cards. She speaks rapidly as she puts the cards down.

YEYE

1merengue. 2big love. 3rice pudding. 4sticks. 5butterfly. 6everything. 7beauty. 8pork rind. 9things. 10string beans, 11this is you. 12cherries. 13poppies. 14candy. 15hope. 16you're welcome. 17snails. 18greens. 19the same. 20not enough. 21saffron. 22teenth which is teeth. 23roses. 24a denture. 25you get nothing. 26pink dress. 27rice and beans. 28something happens to you. 29a tree. 30red bird. 31Rita. Who is Rita?

SARITA

I don't know.

YEYE

32no eight. Where is eight? Here.

(*Turning the eighth card face down.*)

No eight, Turn it down, 33pan pan pan, like this,

(*tapping the card*)

pan pan pan. 34we're almost finished. 35this and 20 no.

(*She turns 35 and 20 down.*)

36sailors. 37horse's head. 38old woman. 39nothing. 40don't smoke. 41here's the old man. 42tea. To drink, 43lantern. What is that? It's upside down. 44toga. What the Greek wears, 45five.

(*Looking back at 5.*)

Five is butterfly. This is five. You understand?

SARITA

Hm.

YEYE

46onions. 47you owe me three dollars. 48many thongs which is things. 49naturally. What? 50sickness. 51nayts. 52this is the last one.

(*Looking back at cards 48, 49, 50, 51, 52.*)

These came out upside down. This one is things. It came out thongs. Naturally, which came out naturally. Sickness. You know what that is. Nayts is nights. And the last one is spike which is spoke. You understand?

(*Sarita nods doubtfully.*)

What did you want to know?

SARITA

Whether he loves me or not.

YEYE

Give me three quarters.

(*Sarita gets three quarters.*)

Put them here.

(*Sarita places them on the table. Yeye taps the coins as she speaks.*)

One, two, three. Quarter, quarter, quarter. He loves you.

SARITA

He does?

YEYE

See? This one is like this. This one's like this and this one is like this. Don't you see? What else do you want to know?

SARITA

If he loves me a lot.

YEYE

Give me three quarters.

(*Sarita takes three quarters.*)

Put them down.

(*She does.*)

One, two, three. Quarter, quarter, quarter. Yes, he loves you a lot.

SARITA

What was he doing with her?

YEYE

Give me three quarters.

SARITA

I don't have no more quarters.

YEYE

What do you have?

SARITA

Pennies.

YEYE

Give me pennies.

(*Sarita puts three pennies on the table.*)

One, two, three. Penny, penny, penny. He wasn't doing anything.

SARITA

I saw him do it.

YEYE

Do what?

SARITA

He was with her.

YEYE

He wasn't doing it.

SARITA

How do you know?

YEYE

It says so here.

SARITA

Where?

YEYE

I told you where.

SARITA

You didn't say anything.

YEYE

I told you plenty.

SARITA

You said nothing.

YEYE

What do you mean nothing?

SARITA

Nothing.

YEYE

Ungrateful! Say you're sorry to the cards.

SARITA

I'm sorry.

YEYE

What else do you want to know?

SARITA

If he loves me.

YEYE

I said he does.

SARITA

Where did you see it! Where? Show me! You didn't see it! You're just saying it!

(*Reaching for the coins.*)

Give me my money!

YEYE

Your fingers will rot.

(*Sarita pulls back. Yeye takes the coins.*)

What else do you want to know?

SARITA

You said he wasn't doing anything.

YEYE

He wasn't.

SARITA

Why was his thing standing up?

YEYE

What was?

SARITA

His thing.

YEYE

Was it?

SARITA

Would I lie to you? And he had his hand on it.

YEYE

He was scratching it. He had an itch.

SARITA

He didn't have an itch. He had something else. I know what he had, I know when he's hot. He was hot. Son of a bitch. I'm going to cut it off.

YEYE

No, you're not. He was just talking to her.

SARITA

Where is he! I'm going to cut it off!

YEYE

They'll put you in jail.

SARITA

Not me!

YEYE

Yes, they will!

SARITA

I'll tell them what he did!

YEYE

They won't care! They'll put you in jail!

SARITA

Let them I! I'll kill them if they do!

YEYE

They'll burn you if you do.

SARITA

I'll kill him and her too!

YEYE

Who is she?

SARITA

It doesn't matter!

(*She brushes some cards off the table.*)

YEYE

Pick them up or you'll rot in hell.

SARITA

(*Picking up the cards.*)

Do you think he cares! Do you think he cares who she is! He doesn't care! He doesn't care who it is! He doesn't care!
Anyone! That's who it is. Anyone! I'll kill him!

YEYE

(*Looks at a card.*)

He was just talking to her.

SARITA

What about!

YEYE

Work.

SARITA

Whose work! He doesn't work.

YEYE

He was talking about work.

SARITA

And how come his thing was sticking up?

YEYE

He was thinking of you.

SARITA

You're lying.

YEYE

(*Pointing.*)

Here it is.

SARITA

What is that?

YEYE

Sticks.

(*She sings "He Was Thinking of You."*)

He was thinking of you,
that's what it means.
He was thinking of you,
not of her. He called you.
You weren't home.
He walked up and down the block.
He called again,
you weren't there.
He turned the corner.
He paced up and down
and stopped a while.
She came along.
They started talking.
He was thinking of you,
that's what it means.
He was thinking of you,
not of her.
He didn't notice
he got aroused.
He was embarrassed
and covered himself
with his hand.

SARITA

He didn't notice. Don't tell me he didn't notice. He noticed!

(*She sings "I'm Pudding."*)

I'm at school
I think of him and I
I get excited. I do.
I get excited. I do.
I think of him and I'm pudding.
I'm pudding.... But I wait. Why can't he wait?

YEYE

Give me a dollar.

SARITA

I'm not giving you no "dollar."

YEYE

What is his name?

SARITA

You know his name.

YEYE

You have to say it so the cards hear it.

SARITA

Julio.

(In a softer tone.)

Julio....

YEYE

Boba.

SARITA

Boba tu.

YEYE

(Holding Sarita's hands between hers in a position of prayer.)

Put your hands together.

SARITA & YEYE

(They sing "Holy Spirit, Good Morning.")

Holy spirit,
bring your daughter,
Sara Fernandez,
what she wants
and prays for. Holy spirit,
don't forsake her,
give your daughter
all she prays
and asks for.

YEYE

Holy spirit, good morning.

SARITA

Good morning.

YEYE

Holy spirit, good night.

SARITA

Good night.

YEYE

Holy spirit, good day.

SARITA

Good day.

YEYE

Holy spirit, good week.

SARITA

Good week.

YEYE

Holy spirit, good month.

SARITA

Good month.

YEYE

Holy spirit, good year.

SARITA

Good year.

SARITA

Yeye, I think I'm going to die. I think I'm going to die. I think I'm dying. Tell me I'm not dying.--He takes my life with him when he leaves me.

YEYE

It's not so.

SARITA

It is. Look at me. I'm dead.

YEYE

You're not dead.

(*Taking Sarita's hand and putting it over the cards.*)

Put your hand here.

SARITA

I'm going to do what he does. I'm going out with every guy I meet.--I am. I'm not going to sit here and wait for him.

YEYE

He loves you, Sari.

SARITA

Like hell he does.

YEYE

Ask the cards to make him be true.

(Sarita closes her eyes tight for a moment. Then, opens them.)

Did you?

SARITA

Yes.

YEYE

(Taking the cards.)

O.K. I'm going home now.

SARITA

Good bye, Yeye, you're good.

YEYE

Good bye, dummy,

(She drops a card. She starts to pick it up and stops. She looks at it.)

SARITA

What is it?

YEYE

(Picking it up.)

Nothing.

(Yeye exits. Lights fade to black. Music is heard.)

Act 1, Scene 2: 1940 I'm Pregnant

Scene 2

1940--I'm Pregnant

Fela's livingroom. Sarita is 14 years old. She lies on the couch. Her feet are up against the couch's back. Her head touches the floor. She has been crying. Fela enters. Sarita wears a parochial school uniform. Fela wears a house dress.

FELA

What's the matter with you?

SARITA

I'm pregnant.

FELA

Don't talk stupid.

SARITA

I'm not talking stupid. I'm pregnant.

FELA

You're a child. You can't be pregnant.

SARITA

I'm serious.

FELA

Would you sit like a normal person?

(*Sarita sits up. Fela notices her tears.*)

Why are you crying?

SARITA

I'm pregnant....

(*There is a pause.*)

FELA

Who says?--You're a child. A baby. Who says!

SARITA

I'm pregnant. No one has to say it.

FELA

You're a kid. Not even in high school. What would your teacher say?

SARITA

My teacher...? I don't care....

FELA

(*Grabbing her by the arm.*)

You don't care?

(*She looks into her eyes.*)

Are you telling the truth? You're lying! It isn't true!

SARITA

It's true.

FELA

How do you know?

SARITA

I missed my period and my breasts hurt. And I know I'm pregnant.

FELA

You're lying!

SARITA

I'm not! Stop saying that! It's true!

FELA

(*Shaking her.*)

Why did you do that! To ruin your life! To spend your life on relief. Like a worm on relief, crawling with children. Is that how I raised you? Is that what I taught you?

(*Slapping her.*)

You embarrass me!

SARITA

Don't!

FELA

What is this!

(*Slapping her.*)

What is this!

SARITA

Don't, Mami!

FELA

I didn't even start watching you!

(*Slapping her.*)

I didn't even start!

SARITA

Don't hit me, Mami!

FELA

I didn't think I had to watch you!

(*Slapping her.*)

You are a kid!

(*Sarita runs left, goes around the chair and sits on it wailing.*)

You're a kid!

(*Raising her arms up in the air.*)

I didn't even start watching you!

(*Going on her knees. Her arms are raised.*)

It's my fault! I didn't watch you!

(*Pulling her hair and beating her chest.*)

It's my fault!

SARITA

No Mami!

FELA

It's my fault!

SARITA

It's not your fault!

FELA

It's my fault! I let you loose in the street!

SARITA

No, Mami.

FELA

It's my fault!

(*She starts to cry.*)

It is my fault.... It is my fault....

SARITA

Don't cry, Mami.

FELA

(*Starting to stand.*)

Where's that kid! Julio!

SARITA

(*Crawls on her knees and grabs Fela.*)

It wasn't him!

FELA

Where is he!

SARITA

It wasn't him!

FELA

Who was it!

SARITA

I don't know!

FELA

Somebody raped you!

SARITA

No!

FELA

Fernando raped you!

SARITA

No, he didn't!

FELA

He's a dirty old man! I knew he was!

SARITA

No!

FELA

Who gave you a baby!

SARITA

Nobody!

FELA

(*Grabbing her.*)

Who did it!

SARITA

I don't know.

FELA

Tell me or I'll kill you.

SARITA

Don't make me tell you.

FELA

Tell me.

SARITA

I went out a lot.

FELA

Who with?

SARITA

With a lot of guys! I don't know who did it! I went out with a lot of guys!

FELA

You don't know who did it?

SARITA

Mami, I was crying all the time. I was unhappy. I had tears in my eyes all the time. You know how I used to be. Julio left me. I was unhappy. You can't think of anything when you're unhappy like that. I went with boys and I felt better. I didn't care who they were. I was unhappy. You know how I was, Mami. You know I get crazy when he leaves me. You know I was crazy. I didn't know what I was doing. Don't be angry, Mami. It's hard enough....

FELA

(*Lowers her head.*)

... I raised you wrong. You didn't have a father. And you didn't have a family. Just me. I didn't teach you right.

SARITA

It's not that, Mami. You taught me right.

(*She holds Fela tightly.*)

It's just that I don't understand.... I'm a savage.... Other people don't have to learn how to be. But I'm a savage. I have to learn how to lead my life.

(*She cries. Fela puts her arms around her. Lights fade to black. Music is heard.*)

Act 1, Scene 3: 1940 Conference

Scene 3

1940--Conference

A few days later. Fela's livingroom. Fernando sits on the couch. Fela sits to the left. Sarita sits to the right. Fernando wears comfortable clothes and a pair of slippers. Sarita and Fela dress as in the scene before.

SARITA

Well, I don't want to marry him.

FELA

Why not.

SARITA

You think I want to marry an old man like him?

FELA

Don't tell Fernando he's an old man.

SARITA

I am sorry Fernando.

FERNANDO

That's all right.

FELA

He is not pretending he is a young man.

SARITA

So, why does he want to marry me?

FELA

Because I asked him. I asked him and he said yes.

SARITA

Well, nobody asked me.

FELA

Shhhh. Nobody has to ask you.

SARITA

I'm not going to be his wife.

(*Fela puts her finger to her mouth.*)

FERNANDO

I am not going to marry her if she talks like that.

FELA

Did you hear? Be nice. Sit up straight.

FERNANDO

A man my age also has a need for affection. I'm lonely. Don't think only young people need affection.

FELA

You're not so lonely, Fernando, you live here with us. And you don't stay in your room all the time. You sit here with us. You eat with us like you are a part of the family and you sit in the livingroom and you listen to the radio. And you talk to us all the time. So don't tell me you are lonely because you are not.

FERNANDO

I'm lonely.

(*He sings "I'm Lonely."*)

I am saying that I'm lonely.
I'm saying that I am alone.
Don't tell me that I am not.
I'm lonely and I know
I'm lonely and I am alone.

FELA

So, what are you trying to say?

FERNANDO

I'm trying to say that I am lonely. And I want somebody in my room.

FELA & SARITA

He's lonely.
He is saying that he's lonely.
He's saying that he is alone.
Don't tell him that he's not.
He's lonely and he knows.
He's lonely and he is alone.

FERNANDO

If I'm going to marry her she has to be polite and she has to move into my room.

FELA

What for?

FERNANDO

To keep me company.

FELA

She can keep you company in the livingroom, not in your bedroom.

FERNANDO

Well, then I will not marry her.

SARITA

I am not keeping him company. He is boring.

FERNANDO

You see what I mean? She's rude and she's a brat. I don't want to marry her.

FELA

She doesn't want to marry you either, I just want you to marry her so her kid is legal, so she's not an unwed mother.

FERNANDO

Let her be an unwed mother.

SARITA

That's what I said.

FELA

You should be ashamed.

SARITA

Well, I'm not ashamed.

FELA

We have to make an arrangement.

FERNANDO

What kind of arrangement?

SARITA

I'm not making any arrangement.

FERNANDO

Neither am I.

SARITA

That's right.

FELA

You have to make an arrangement, you can't have everything your way.

(*To Fernando.*)

What arrangement.

FERNANDO

Well, in winter when it's cold, one would like a warm body to feel warm.

SARITA

I am not going to keep your body warm. I have other plans.

FELA

What plans?

SARITA

I'm going to law school.

FELA

What?

SARITA

Why not?

FELA

Law school!

SARITA

I am going to move downtown.

FELA

You can't move downtown.

SARITA

Why not?

FELA

Because I said you can't.

SARITA

I'm moving in with Yeye then.

FELA

What's the point of that?

SARITA

I don't want to get married. I am going to school.

FERNANDO

You can't go to school anymore.

SARITA

Why not?

FERNANDO

Because you are pregnant and you should be ashamed of yourself.

SARITA

I am going to law school to be a lawyer.

FERNANDO

That's for men.

SARITA

So what?--I'll study medicine.

FERNANDO

You can't.

SARITA

Why?

FERNANDO

You have to start when you're little.

SARITA

You don't study medicine when you're little.

FERNANDO

You do. You start when you're little.

SARITA

You don't know anything about medicine, Fernando.--All right, I'll study something else.

FERNANDO

What?

SARITA

I don't know. I'll join the army.

FERNANDO

YOU can't.

SARITA

Why not?

FERNANDO

They don't want children there.

SARITA

I'll join the navy.

FELA

Stop talking nonsense. You'll have to get married.

SARITA

Well, I won't.

FELA

I already got a license.

SARITA

Well, you can return it.

FELA

And you are not ashamed?

SARITA

No.

FELA

(*To Fernando.*)

Can we return it?

FERNANDO

I don't know.

(*To Sarita.*)

And how are you going to study? That takes money.

SARITA

It does? I won't study then.

FERNANDO

You'll get married then?

SARITA

Not to you.

FERNANDO

I don't want to marry you either.

SARITA

Why not?

FERNANDO

Because you're a brat.

SARITA

So are you. You're a brat.

FERNANDO

I'm too old to be a brat.

SARITA

You're an old brat. A cranky old brat.

FERNANDO

That's because I need companionship.

I need some sweetness in my life.

Don't tell me that I don't.

I need to have
somebody of my own.

I need someone who'll tuck me in.

Someone who'll guard my sleep.

Someone who'll ask me how I feel.

FELA

I ask you how you feel and Sara asks you how you feel. Don't tell us we don't ask you how you feel.

FERNANDO

You don't ask me enough.

FELA

We'll ask you more often.

SARITA & FELA

He's lonely.
He is saying that he's lonely.
He's saying that he is alone.
Don't tell him that he's not.
He's lonely and he knows.
He's lonely and he is alone.

SARITA

I know what I'm going to do. I'll go to work and support my kid. I'll go to work and that's that. I said what I have to say.

FERNANDO

Listen to her talk.

FELA

Who is going to take care of your baby?

SARITA

You. That's why you're my mother.

(*To Fernando.*)

And you too. That's why you live here.

FERNANDO

Is that so?

SARITA

That's right, I'll support him. So that's that. You heard what I said.

(*To Fela.*)

You take care of him.

(*To Fernando.*)

And you too. And I'll support him.

(*Lights fade to black. Music is heard.*)

Act 1, Scene 4: 1940 Fela's Song

Scene 4

1940--Fela's Song

Fela's livingroom. Fela is sitting on the couch. She dresses as in the scene before.

FELA

(She sings "A Woman Like Me.")

You spend your life waiting for the first love.
You hope that first love
will come back.
But he's gone
away.

A woman like me
falls in love

with a man,
and she hopes
some day he'll come back.

She hopes
that one day
a letter
will come
with the words
"I'll return."

But that young man
ran away from her.
He travelled the world
as a merchant marine.
He drank till he fell
as he tried to forget
all he left behind.

She remembers the day
that he said,
"I love you."
The day that he said "Be my own."
The day that he kissed her till dawn.
The day that she gave him her soul.

A woman like me,
loves a man,
only one,
and he must
run away.
He must forsake her.
He must forget her.
He must betray her.
And he must drink
And die alone.

(Lights fade to black. Music is heard.)

Act 1, Scene 5: 1942 Sarita Leaves

Scene 5

1942--Sarita Leaves

Sarita is 16 years old. She has a bundle of clothes under her arm. She learns over Fela who has fallen asleep on the chair to the left. On the couch there is a teddy bear. The lights are very dim. Fela dresses as in the scene before. Sarita wears a coat and beret. Sarita speaks to Fela in a low voice. Fela does not awaken.

SARITA

... Mami... I'm leaving. Julio is back and I'm going with him. I have to, Mami. He wants me to go with him. Mami don't be angry. Take care of Melo. I'll write to you. I'll send him money. Don't worry, Mami, I'll take care of myself.

(She starts to exit. Lights fade to black. Music is heard.)

Act 1, Scene 6: 1942 The Mirror

Scene 6

1942--The Mirror

The next day. Sarita and Julio are seen in the upper level. They sit side by side with their arms around each other. They face front and smile tenderly as if they are looking at each other in a mirror. Sarita wears a dress and beret. Julio wears a double breasted suit. There is drum music playing. Lights fade to black.

Act 1, Scene 7: 1943 1st Letter

Scene 7

1943--1st Letter

Sarita's kitchen in a tenement building. Sarita is 17 years old. She sits at the table and reads out loud from a letter she has just written. There is another chair facing the right side of the table. Sarita and Julio wear the same clothes as in the scene before.

SARITA

Julio, you left and here I am. You are a son of a bitch and did not appreciate my love. You did this too many times already and this is the last time. I don't care, I'm doing fine. It's you who will suffer,

(She writes as she speaks the following.)

I'm going to put a curse on you.

(She reads.)

You cannot treat me like this.--Sarita.

(She props the letter on the table. She looks at it and kisses it. She props the letter up. She turns it so it will face the door. She waits. A few seconds later footsteps are heard. She quickly exits left. There is a knock on the door. There is silence. There is another knock.)

Come in!

JULIO

(Kicking.)

Open up!

SARITA

Come in!

JULIO

The door is locked I Open it! I don't have the key.

SARITA

(Enters, tiptoes across, opens the door and returns to the left still on tiptoe.)

How come you don't have your key?

JULIO

(Enters.)

I don't know how come I don't have my key.

(He goes over to Sarita and tries to kiss her. She scurries to the right corner. He turns the chair to face her and sits. He opens his fly and lowers his suspenders as he speaks.)

Come here, sit on my lap.

SARITA

No.

JULIO

Come here. I'm hot.

SARITA

No.

JULIO

Hey! How come you say no?

SARITA

Look behind you.

JULIO

(Sees the note and takes it.)

What does it say?

SARITA

Read it.

JULIO

I can't read that. It's not clear. You don't write clear. Read it to me, but read it quick because I want to kiss you.

SARITA

You just read it.

JULIO

O.K.

(*He starts to read. He sneaks looks in her direction.*)

Hey, honey, you look cute.

SARITA

Did you read it?

JULIO

Hey, honey, look at me.

SARITA

What for?

JULIO

Give me a kiss.

SARITA

Never mind.

JULIO

Come here. Sit on my lap.

SARITA

What for?

JULIO

For nothing.

(*Sarita straddles him. They kiss. Her pelvis moves.*)

SARITA

Why are you the way you are? Why are you so sweet and so juicy and so bad?

(*The lights fade to black, Sarita emits orgasmic sounds. There are the sounds of struggle and a fall. Julio speaks in the dark.*)

JULIO

Come here! Come here, cono.

(*The stage is lit. Sarita stands on the up left corner. Julio kneels on the floor. He holds on to her.*)

JULIO

Come here. I didn't come yet.

SARITA

Tough luck! You're a son of a bitch and I'm leaving you.

JULIO

Look at me. I want you.

SARITA

No.

JULIO

O.K., come and kiss me good bye.

SARITA

Not me. I'm not kissing you.

(She gives him a kiss. Then another and another. He lets himself be kissed.)

Oh, honey, why are you so good to kiss?

JULIO

I don't know.

(The lights fade to black. The stage is lit again. Julio stands against the wall up right. His pants hang around his hips. Sarita sits on the chair to the right.)

JULIO

O.K., so kiss me good bye.

(She goes to him, puts her hand on his pelvis and kisses his neck. The lights fade to black. Music is heard.)

Act 1, Scene 8: 1943 2nd Letter

Scene 8

1943--2nd Letter

Six months later. Sarita is 17 years old. She sits at the kitchen table. She writes. She reads what site has written. Sarita and Julio wear the same clothes as in the scene before.

SARITA

Julio, you left and you don't care how lonely I feel. You don't know what it is to have this happen to you and that's why you do it. Being here alone is like being in a grave. You are a son of a bitch and you don't care if I die. I feel sorry for you because you have no heart. Maybe I am a jerk and you are right. Maybe I should have never loved you or anyone. Maybe I should just do whatever comes my way and that's better, because what's the use, life stinks anyway Good bye, Julio, let me tell you that you died in my heart and I feel sorry for you.--If you come here and you see this note just leave the keys on the table because I don't want you here again.

(There is the sound of a key in the lock. The door opens. It is Julio. He walks to her. She puts her arms around his waist. He notices the letter, picks it up, crumples it and kisses her. The lights fade to black. Music is heard.)

Act 1, Scene 9: 1944 3rd Letter

Scene 9

1944--3rd Letter

Six months later. Sarita is 18 years old. She sits at the kitchen table. She writes. She reads what she has written. She wears the same clothes as in the scene before.

SARITA

Julio, when you come in and you see this note you are going to laugh as you always do because you'll think I'm going to

forgive you and maybe you're right that I have no will power when it comes to you, and that I am an old rag and that that's why you have no respect for me. I have no respect for me either.--I know I cannot trust myself. When I am with you I don't care about anything and I hate myself for that. I can't live any longer because I hate myself. I'm going to die Julio and I don't care what you think. I'm doing it because I hate myself and what I am. It is awful not to have pride--I'm not doing it because I love you because this is not love.--It's like a sickness that lives in my heart and I have tried to tear it out but I can't. I am sick with it and I want to die. May God help me. I hope my baby can forgive me. And I hope my Mami understands. Good bye.

(She puts the note down, puts on her coat and exits. Lights fade to black. Music is heard.)

Act 1, Scene 10: 1944 Empire State Building

Scene 10

1944--Empire State Building

A few hours later. There is a backdrop which depicts the Empire State Building. Sarita stands to the left. Mark stands to the right. They both face front and look down. Sarita wears a coat. Mark wears a soldier's uniform.

SARITA

Hey. You.

(Mark looks up.)

Move aside.

MARK

What?

SARITA

Move.

(Short pause.)

Get out of the way.

MARK

What for?

SARITA

I'm going to jump.

(He looks at her.)

Are you going to move?

(There is a pause.)

MARK

No.

SARITA

Move or I'll fall on you.

MARK

Why do you want to jump?

SARITA

Move or I'm going to fall on you.

(*Mark takes a step to the side.*)

Move further.

(*He takes another step. She signals with her hand.*)

More.

(*He takes another step.*)

More.

(*She gestures.*)

More.

MARK

I'm up against the wall.

SARITA

Move to this side then.

(*Mark does. There is a pause.*)

MARK

Why do you want to jump?

(*Sarita begins to whimper.*)

Can I come up?

(*She doesn't answer.*)

Will you wait till I get up?

(*She nods. He turns to face her.*)

What's wrong?

(*She lowers her head and remains silent.*)

May I come closer?

(*She nods. He moves closer.*)

Don't cry.

(*She looks at him.*)

You want to come have some coffee with me?

(*She nods. He takes her by the arm. They take a step together. She changes her mind, moves away, then walks to him.*)

SARITA

I want to die.

MARK

Why?

SARITA

Because I am miserable.

MARK

Why?

SARITA

Because I am jealous. Jealous! Jealous! Jealousy that tears me apart and I want to die. He has no respect for me. He takes advantage of me. He mistreats me.

MARK

Does he hit you?

SARITA

Who?

MARK

He.

SARITA

Let him dare. If he hits me I'll kill him.--He is untrue. He betrays me. Anyone can take him from me. Anyone. And I die. Each time he does it I die.--He is not mine. I keep him. But he is not mine. He dishonors me.--Don't you see? I keep him. I work hard. He doesn't work. He's always planning to start work. But there's always something.--He steps all over me. I am dishonored. I don't want to live.

(*She looks at him.*)

You are so nice.--You are so nice.--I know you're nice.

(*He has fallen in love.*)

MARK

(*He sings "You Are Tahiti."*)

You are the flower.

I am the snow.

You are Tahiti.

I am Gauguin.

You are all color

I am the brush. I, without you,
am but a void.

You are the flower.

I am the snow.

You are Tahiti.
I am Gauguin.

I am the vessel
that fills with nectar
at your approach.

You are my joy
You are my joy
My love
My joy.

SARITA

Do you know that... that without you I would have died?

(*The lights fade to black. There is music.*)

Act 2

Act 2, Scene 1: Author's Scene 11: 1944 The Party

ACT TWO

Scene 11

1944--The Party

Two months later. Fela's livingroom. Sarita is 18 years old. She and Fela decorate an altar to Oshun (the Virgin of La Caridad del Cobre). They wear party clothes. There are conga drums on the up left corner of the stage.

SARITA

I met an American boy and I like him. He is shy and very sweet. He thinks I am the greatest thing in the world and he takes me out. We go where I want. He is always smiling. He likes me, you know. I know he likes me. He brings me flowers, like the old sweethearts. He brings them to be funny, but he still brings them. He's very cute. He has a pink nose. He's a cutie pie. He's a baby. He's young for me. I'm not older, but I have been through things. We go dancing. And he's not bad. He has his rhythm and his little smile.

(*Pointing to her side. She sings "A Little Boo Boo."*)

And here.
I have a boo-boo.

(*Pointing each time to different parts of her body.*)

Put a little kiss here
another here.
Take away this boo-boo
this boo-boo du du du boo du du du
boo du
here

Put a little kiss...
another here.
Take away this boo-boo
today.
Put your lips there,
Papi.

(*Sarita puts her hand on her breast.*)

FELA

Niña!

SARITA & FELA

Ay Mami, but it feels good
when he kisses me.
Put a little kiss here
Good bye little boo-boo.
boo du du du
du du du du
boo du du du
du du du du.
Another boo-boo
Good bye, pain.

(*They dance a jitterbug. At the end of the song Sarita sits left and Fela returns to the fixing of the altar. Yeye enters carrying two bowls. She wears a party dress.*)

YEYE

Which one do you want?

FELA

Both.

(*Yeye sits to the right. Fernando enters carrying a plate with fritters in a paper bag and flowers. He wears a suit and tie.*)

FERNANDO

(*Giving the flowers to Fela.*)

Here are the flowers and here are the fritters. But I want to make it clear that I don't believe in all this espiritismo and santeria. I'm a Catholic and I don't see why you have to give food to the Virgin.

FELA

That's Oshun, Fernando.

FERNANDO

That's a statue of the Virgin Mary.

FELA

Yes, but it's Oshun. Give me the fritters.

(*There is a knock on the door. Sarita goes to open it.*)

FERNANDO

And why do you have to feed her? Do you think she's going to come down and eat the food? She has no teeth.

FELA

When you put flowers in church, do you think the saints come down to smell them?

FERNANDO

No, but they like that you do.

FELA

Well, Oshun likes that I feed her. Kneel down and pray, Fernando. You're splitting hairs.

(He does. Juan and Sarita enter. Sarita stands behind Yeye's chair and leans on it.)

Hello Juan. You came just in time.

JUAN

Hello Fela. La bendición.

FELA

Que Dios te bendiga. We were just going to teach Fernando how to pray.

JUAN

Maybe if I say a prayer to Oshun it would inspire Don Fernando.

FELA

That would be good.

JUAN

(Kneels in front of the altar. He sings "Ofe Isia.")

Oshun yeye.

Oshun yeye.

Librame de Ado

Librame de Ofu

También de Araye

Para que todo sea oye

Para que todo sea yeye.

(He puts his hand on Fernando's head.)

Ebofi Eboada

(He stands, goes to the drums and plays.)

Ofe isia. Ofe isia.

FERNANDO

Ofe isia. Ofe isia.

JUAN

Oshun y cole. Ofe isia

CHORUS

Ofe isia

JUAN

Elade Oshun osha mina la yeo

CHORUS

Elade Oshun

(*The women start dancing.*)

JUAN

Osha mìnà la yeo

CHORUS

Elade Oshun

JUAN

Eko lare lare

CHORUS

Eko eko

JUAN

Lare lare

CHORUS

Eko eko

JUAN

Oma oma oke oke

CHORUS

Oma oma oke oke

JUAN

Yeye moro

CHORUS

Oma oma oke oke

(*Fela and Sarita dance. Fernando sits on the chair on the left. Toward the end of the dance Mark enters and joins Sarita in the dance. The drum music ends. A foxtrot starts. Mark and Sarita dance. Fela sits on the couch.*)

MARK

Hm....

SARITA

Hm....

MARK

You're a tropical beauty.

SARITA

And you...

MARK

Me?

SARITA

You are a beauty from I don't know where.

MARK

I'm not a beauty.

SARITA

Where are you from?

MARK

From Cleveland.

SARITA

And in Cleveland all the fellows look like you?

MARK

No.

SARITA

I knew they didn't. They couldn't. You're too cute. What do they look like?

MARK

They all look different.

SARITA

Do they all smile like you?

MARK

No.

SARITA

What do they smile like?

(He makes a face. There is a knock on the door. Yeye goes to open it.)

And what do they say when they like a girl?

MARK

They say Oo! Loo-loo-loo-loo-loo!

SARITA

And is it true that they are all preachers' sons?

MARK

Yes.

SARITA

And is it true that they are all evangelists?

MARK

Yes.

(Julio and Yeye enter. Yeye returns to her chair. Julio carries a box of chocolates which he gives to Fela. He turns to watch the couple dance. He nods to Fernando.)

SARITA

And what do they dance?

MARK

They jitterbug.

SARITA

Oh, yes?

MARK

Uh huh.

SARITA

And what else?

MARK

(Producing a corsage of flowers.)

We bring flowers to the ladies.

SARITA

Are those boys marvelous?

MARK

Yes.

SARITA

Hm. That's nice.

(They dance a moment longer. The music ends. Sarita walks toward the altar. She sees Julio and drops the flowers.)

JULIO

Go ahead, dance, dance. I don't care if you dance.

SARITA

I don't care if you dance either. Go ahead dance.--I was dancing before you came. I didn't ask you if I could. Did I?

JULIO

That's true. But I think you should.

SARITA

Sure, but you weren't here. That's why I went ahead and did it. I would have waited for you to appear, but I didn't know if you were alive.

JULIO

Well, I said it's all right if you dance. Why do you have to get like that?

SARITA

Because you don't have to give me permission to dance.

(*Doing a dance step.*)

Look! I don't need your permission.

JULIO

I just thought you may want to know that I think it's all right.

SARITA

Sure. Let me know any time you think it's all right. I'm very interested.

(*She exits. Mark approaches Julio.*)

JULIO

How do you do. I am very glad to meet you. I heard a lot about you. I was looking forward to meeting you. You look like you are in business. What kind of business are you in?

MARK

What kind of business are you in?

JULIO

What do you mean?

MARK

What line of business?

JULIO

I'm on relief.

MARK

Are you disabled?

JULIO

Yes. Not able to work.

MARK

Why not?

JULIO

I need free time.

MARK

For what?

JULIO

To do nothing.

MARK

Don't you think you should be in the service?

JULIO

Oh no. I'm too busy.

MARK

Doing what?

JULIO

I do some things.

MARK

What?

JULIO

I'm a pickpocket.

(He puts his hands in Mark's trouser pockets and starts emptying his pockets.)

See?

MARK

Wait a moment.

JULIO

It's all right. It's all right.

(He starts emptying Mark's jacket pockets.)

FELA

Julio!

SARITA

(Entering.)

What's the matter?

JULIO

See? This is how I do it.--I don't want to hurt you. I just want to get all your money.

MARK

(*Grabbing Julio by the arm.*)

Cut that out.

FELA

Stop that.

MARK

Come outside. I don't want to hit you here. Come outside.

FELA

Stop that! Both of you!

(*Sarita pushes Mark to the right. Yeye and Fernando push Julio to the left.*)

Cut that out Julio. You'll have to leave if you act like that.

JULIO

Business! Business! You're nothing but a clean shirt! A clean shirt!

(*Fela takes Mark out. Juan, Yeye and Fernando exit.*)

What is he! A clean shirt. Nothing but a clean shirt! A clean shirt! A clean shirt!

(*Sarita picks up Mark's belongings from the floor and is about to exit. Julio speaks to her. She turns and looks at Julio. They stare at each other through the following. Mark's shadow appears in the up left window.*)

MARK

(*He sings "His Wonderful Eye."*)

For the lord
speaks in the darkness,
shines in the shadow,
walks in the swamp.

For the lord
came to the valley,
walked in the forest,
brightened the sky.

And I see his eye,
and his eye says come to me.
And I see his face,
and his face says follow me.

(*Sarita exits. Julio walks to the right and faces front.*)

And I see his wonderful eye

looking, looking at me. --See his wonderful eye
looking, looking at me.

(*The light in the window fades.*)

JULIO

(*Speaking front.*)

I don't work! O'K'! I don't like to work!--You don't work on Sunday and you think that's smart. Well, it's not. I don't work all week. That's smarter! For me every day is Sunday. Monday's Sunday. Tuesday's Sunday. Wednesday's Sunday. That's smarter. You go to the factory.--I hang around the street. So, maybe I die young--so maybe. I'm not spending my life in a factory.

(*Sarita appears on the up left door. Julio turns to her and points.*)

Not for you, and not for anyone.

(*Music starts. They walk to center. They dance and sing. There is a spot on them.*)

JULIO

(*He sings "Here Comes the Night."*)

Here comes the chill,
I feel it moving
deep into my bones
and as I hold you in my arms
I know that I have lost you,
Now I know that I am done.

SARITA

Here comes the still,
the deadly night
that brings the darkened time.
And as I look into your eyes
I know my heart is silent
I have laid down to die.

SARITA & JULIO

Frozen fingers
hold the shadow
Bloodless lips
want to smile.
Icy eyes look at
the shadow
of a love that's but a ghost.

(*The lights fade to black.*)

Act 2, Scene 2: Author's Scene 12: 1945 The Letter

Scene 12

1945--The Letter

Fela's livingroom. Yeye sits at the table holding a hand of cards. Fela stands in the doorway to the right. The deck of cards and Fela's hand are on the table. They wear Sunday clothes.

FELA

Teyo said, "Come when you can. I'll give you a room and food and clothes."

(*She exits and returns to the doorway.*)

I wrote to him that I was coming and that I was pregnant with his baby.

(*She exits and returns.*)

And when I arrived he wasn't here. He ran away because he didn't want to take care of me; and the baby.

(*She exits, returns with a cup of coffee and sits.*)

I had no money and no place to sleep. Are you sure you don't want coffee?

YEYE

I'm sure.

FELA

And I almost had no clothes because I came with what I had which was almost nothing. When I arrived they told me he no longer lived there, that he had gotten work on a boat and that he said he was not coming back.

YEYE

And what did you do?

FELA

Nothing. I couldn't do anything.

(*There is a pause.*)

I stayed there in the hallway. I stood against the wall and didn't move for a long time. I didn't know where to go. Later the super came and he asked me if I had no place to go and his wife brought me a plate of food. And then she asked me to go in the apartment and she asked me if I had no one to call. I didn't and they said I could sleep there if I wanted to.

YEYE

Did he ever come back?

FELA

(*She shakes her head.*)

Sometime after I heard he was back home. He was sick. And he died. I didn't mourn him. It felt different not thinking he was alive someplace. Something went empty inside me. But I didn't cry for him. I didn't tell Sarita her dad was dead. I'll tell her sometime. So she knows that her dad is buried someplace. It may be that she needs to know that.

YEYE

That her dad is dead?

FELA

Yes, maybe she needs to know that.

YEYE

You never saw him, then?

FELA

No, Never. You don't want coffee?

YEYE

O.K.

(*Fela exits and returns with a cup of coffee. She sits.*)

YEYE

You know who I saw the other day?

FELA

Who?

YEYE

Sister Clara.

FELA

How is she?

YEYE

She looked good.

FELA

She was strict.

YEYE

She wasn't as bad as she appeared to be. She talked to us about things. She talked about obedience. She said that obedience was beneficial to the spirit. That it was conducive to spiritual growth.

FELA

I know. Tell that to Sarita.

YEYE

She knows it. She used to listen to Sister Clara like I did. She'd go on her knees and cry and say, I want to be obedient, Yeye. I want to obey. I want to be obedient. I want to obey I want to obey I want to obey I want to obey I want to obey.

FELA

Yes, I know.

(*They play their cards.*)

... Why did Mario say what he said?

YEYE

About what?

FELA

About the baby.

YEYE

He said he didn't want a girl.

FELA

Did he say that?

YEYE

Yes.

FELA

And what is he going to do if you have a girl?

YEYE

Nothing. He said he'll leave.

FELA

And what are you going to do if he leaves?

YEYE

I don't know Fe. He's going to leave anyway. I know he's going to leave whether he leaves me now or he leaves me later. Whether he leaves me because I have a girl or just because he wants to leave. He's going to go anyway.--I want to have a baby just the same.

(*She smiles.*)

I want to have a baby. Men are like that, Fe. They don't want a family. They don't feel like women that they want to have a baby, I want to have a baby. Have a little baby in my arms. Men don't have that need and they get frightened when their women start having babies. For them it's a weight on their backs. It's being chained. For women too it's being chained. But they don't mind. They want the baby and it's part of them. Things are tough for women.--They are tough for men too because they don't understand it.--To them it's just a weight on their backs. It's not their fault, that's how God made them. Is it their fault? If they are that way it must be for a reason.

(*Taking an envelope from her pocket.*)

I got this in the mail.

(*She puts it on the table.*)

FELA

What is it?

YEYE

It's from Julio. Inside there's an envelope that says "for Sara,"

FELA

Why are you telling me?

YEYE

Because I don't know what to do with it. I don't know if I should give it to her.

FELA

Well... I don't know either.--Don't give it to her. Throw it out.

YEYE

... I don't know what to do with it.

FELA

Well, don't leave it there.

YEYE

(She puts the letter in the couch, between a cushion and the arm. Going back to her chair.)

If she sees it she sees it. If she doesn't she doesn't.

FELA

Play, it's your turn.

(They start to play.)

YEYE

At what time are they coming?

FELA

They should be here soon.

YEYE

Are they going to get married?

FELA

(Shrugs her shoulders.)

He wanted to and she didn't want to. Then she wanted and he didn't want to.

YEYE

Why not?

FELA

Time passes and men lose their interest.

YEYE

He's lost interest?

FELA

No, he's interested. I don't know why he didn't want to get married. I don't understand them. They're not like they used to be. They're complicated. Their reasons are always different than what they used to be. You think I understand them. Do you understand them? The war changed things. I don't understand young people anymore. Play.

YEYE

Are Melo and Mark still good friends?

FELA

Oh, yes.

YEYE

Is he with them now?

FELA

No, he's out with Fernando. They went to buy shoes.

YEYE

For Melo?

FELA

For Fernando. He wanted Melo's opinion.

YEYE

Fernando is nice to him.

FELA

He thinks he is his father.

YEYE

You should marry him.

FELA

Are you crazy?

YEYE

Everybody thinks you live together anyway.

FELA

They do?

YEYE

Sure.

FELA

Who does?

YEYE

Everybody. Anybody in the block.

FELA

Hm.

(*The doorbell rings.*)

Here they are.

(*Sarita and Mark enter. Sarita is 19 years old. She carries a large box. Mark carries a bag of groceries. They wear Sunday clothes. They kiss at the door.*)

SARITA

Hello, hello.

(*Kiss.*)

FELA

Hello.

(*Kiss.*)

SARITA

Where's Melo.

FELA

He's with Fernando. Hello, Mark.

(*Kiss.*)

SARITA

I got him the truck. Where did they go?

MARK

Hello.

(*Kiss.*)

FELA

Give me your coats.--To get shoes for Fernando. He wanted Melo's opinion.

MARK

Sure. Melo has good taste.

SARITA

(*Walking to Yeye.*)

Yeye, how are you?

(*They kiss.*)

YEYE

Fine... fine. How are you? How are you, Mark?

SARITA

Fine.

MARK

I'm fine.

FELA

You look good. You're putting on some weight.

MARK

Yeah, I have to go on a diet.

FELA

Don't go on a diet. You don't need to go on a diet. You're still too skinny. Guess what I'm making?

MARK

What?

FELA

Black beans.

MARK

I had my heart set on that.

SARITA

She knows how to get to him.

FELA

And platanos.

MARK

How soon?

FELA

Soon. And lechón.

MARK

I can't bear it.

FELA

We'll finish the game and then we'll eat.

SARITA

What are you playing?

YEYE

Brisca.

SARITA

Well, I don't play that.

YEYE

We could play something else.

SARITA

(*Putting her hand on Yeye's stomach.*)

How does it feel?

YEYE

Wonderful.

SARITA

I'm so glad.

YEYE

I'm too.

FELA

You want something to drink?

SARITA

(*To Fela.*)

We brought beer. And bread and coquitos.--When are they coming?

FELA

Melo?

SARITA

Yes.

FELA

Soon. They'll be here soon.--I have pasteles too.

SARITA

That's good.

(*She lies on the couch.*)

We'll have plenty to eat.

FELA

Come, Mark, taste this.

(*Mark exits. Sarita feels the letter with her hand and pulls it out.*)

SARITA

(*Putting the letter on the table.*)

This was on the side of the couch.

(*She leans over to glance at the envelope.*)

That looks like...

(*She stops short and looks at Yeye questioningly.*)

It's addressed to you.

YEYE

It's for you.

(*Sarita opens the letter. Mark enters.*)

MARK

What is it?

SARITA

A letter for Yeye I found on the couch.

(*Yeye puts the letter in her pocket. Mark sits.*)

MARK

Shall we play?

YEYE

(*Picking up the cards.*)

What do you want to play?

MARK

Let's play rummy.

(*Yeye shuffles the cards and deals.*)

FELA

Do you want some beer, Mark?

MARK

Yes, thank you.

FELA

You, Sara?

SARITA

I'll get it.

(*She exits.*)

(*Mark, Yeye, and Sarita sing "The Letter."*)

MARK

What is that you've got in your pocket?

YEYE

It's nothing.

MARK

Let me see what you've got in your pocket.

YEYE

It's nothing. It's personal.

MARK

A letter from your boyfriend?

YEYE

Mark, I don't have a boyfriend.

MARK

Oh, no?

(*Mark takes the letter and crushes it in his hand.*)

YEYE

Mark, let me have that letter.

MARK

Sara does.

YEYE

Don't do that. Don't do that please!

MARK

I'm not kidding. She has a boyfriend. Her true love.

YEYE

Don't say that.

MARK

You don't know that?

YEYE

Please, Mark.

MARK

Don't worry. You could pass letters between them any time you want to.

YEYE

Please stop.

MARK

They'll trust you. It isn't like you told me "This is what's happening, Mark. I got this in the mail."

YEYE

Let me have the letter.

MARK

You didn't say that.

(*Tearing the first envelope off.*)

You didn't say that. So you have nothing to worry about.

(*Tearing the second envelope open and taking out the letter.*)

Let's see what it says.

(*Putting the letter to his nose.*)

Is it perfumed? Oh, what a pity. It isn't. It's not that kind of romance.

(*He opens it.*)

Let's see.

SARITA

(*Entering.*)

What have I done?

MARK

Let's see.

(*Throwing the letter at her.*)

Here! It's a letter from your lover!

(*He grabs his coat.*)

SARITA

What have I done to make you speak this way to me?

MARK

Your lover! See what he wants!

SARITA

What are you thinking of?

MARK

What does he want! What does the darling want?

SARITA

What are you thinking of

(*Mark exits. His voice is heard in the distance.*)

MARK

What does he want! What does your lover want! What does he want! What does he want! What does he want! Read his letter! Read his letter! What does he want?

SARITA

What have I done? What are you thinking of? I have not seen him since I've been with you.

(*Lights fade to black. Music is heard.*)

Act 2, Scene 3: Author's Scene 13: 1945 Summer Resort

Scene 13

1945--Summer Resort

Six months later. A summer resort. Sarita sits on a beach chair. She is sunning herself. There is an empty chair next to her. Mark enters and sits. Through the following speech he takes off his shoes, socks, and shirt. He rolls up his pants and lies back. Sarita wears the skirt of her previous dress and a halter. Mark wears pants and a Hawaiian shirt.

SARITA

What happened?

MARK

Someone passed out.

SARITA

Who?

MARK

A woman.

SARITA

What happened to her?

MARK

I don't know. I couldn't get near her. There was a crowd around her.

SARITA

She probably ate and went in the water.

MARK

(*Surprised.*)

That's what they were saying.

SARITA

Maybe that's what happened.

MARK

Why would someone pass out from that?

SARITA

From eating and going in the water?

MARK

Yes.

SARITA

You didn't know one could die from that?

MARK

Why would anyone die from that?

SARITA

You must be kidding.

MARK

I'm not kidding. Can you die from that?

SARITA

Sure. You get a congestion and die.

MARK

What is that?

SARITA

A congestion? You don't know what that is?

MARK

No.

SARITA

That's what you get when you go in the water after you eat.

MARK

Come on.

SARITA

You can also die if you drink cold beer or a cold drink after you eat too much on a hot day.

MARK

And what do you call that?

SARITA

Empacho.

MARK

That sounds like a tango. Tango empache.

SARITA

That's apache. Tango apache. I hope you don't catch an empacho and die.

MARK

We don't have empacho in this country.

SARITA

You do. You just don't know what it's called.

MARK

We don't. In English we don't die if we drink cold beer after a meal.

SARITA

You could also die if you take a shower after a meal...or a bath. You can kick a leg and that sounds like a conga. You kick your leg when you do a conga. You think empacho sounds like a tango, but kick a leg sounds like a conga.

MARK

You can die from doing a conga?

SARITA

No, you can't die from doing a conga but neither does empacho sound like a conga.

MARK

Well, I don't think she went in the water. She was fully dressed.

SARITA

Maybe she put her feet in the water.

MARK

Maybe. She was wearing shoes though.

SARITA

Well, maybe she fell in.

MARK

Well, maybe.

SARITA

Was she wet?

MARK

I don't know. I didn't see any water.

SARITA

Maybe the water had dried.

MARK

Maybe.

SARITA

Well, if she didn't fall in the water, what did she die of?

MARK

I don't think she died.

SARITA

Well, you don't know how to do a conga, anyway.

MARK

Yes, I do. Anyone can do a conga.

(*He moves his feet as if doing a conga.*)

SARITA

Maybe.

(*Short pause.*)

MARK

You don't take a shower after a meal?

SARITA

No.

MARK

I do.

SARITA

It's a wonder you're alive.

(*Lights fade to black. Music is heard.*)

Act 2, Scene 4: Author's Scene 14: 1945 Prayer

Scene 14

1945--Prayer

A few days later. In Fela's livingroom. Sarita kneels facing front. She looks up. She wears the same dress as in Scene 12.

SARITA

If one has one love in one's lifetime, only one, and one has been true to that love, does one go straight to heaven?--for being true?

(Short pause.)

I hope so. Because here it's hell.

(Short pause.)

I just want to know if you know about this?

(Short pause.)

Is this your idea?--Or is the devil doing it?

(Short pause.)

Give me a sign.

(Short pause.)

Say something.

(Short pause.)

Go on.

(Short pause.)

Do something.

(She palms her hand as if there were a small person in it. She lowers her voice.)

Good Lord, child, somebody made a mistake. I put you in for an easy life. You're my favorite kid. Don't worry about a thing, honey. I'll take care of things.

(Using her own voice.)

Oh, God! Thank you God.--God. I am serious. I cannot breathe. I'm burning. I'm turned inside myself. Do you know what I'm saying?--I feel my life's leaving me. I feel I'm dying. God, I want to love Mark and no one else.

(Lights fade to black. Music is heard.)

Act 2, Scene 5: Author's Scene 15: 1946 I Don't Love You

Scene 15

1946--I Don't Love You

Sarita's kitchen. Sarita is 20 years old. She sits to the right of the kitchen table. Julio sits on the floor against the right wall. Their clothes are dishevelled.

SARITA

No. I don't love you. I don't love you.

JULIO

You don't. Didn't you love me a moment ago? Didn't you?

SARITA

No.

JULIO

Oh no. You didn't.

SARITA

No.

JULIO

Oh no?

SARITA

No.

JULIO

And what was that that happened just now. What was that?

SARITA

I don't know. I lost my mind.

(*He goes to her and takes her arm.*)

Let go.

JULIO

Baby.

SARITA

Let me be.

(*He takes a step away and stops. There is a pause.*)

What was it you wanted?

JULIO

A kiss.

SARITA

O`K`--Come here if you want it.

(*He goes to her.*)

Take it.

(*He kisses her. Lights fade to black. Music is heard.*)

Act 2, Scene 6: Author's Scene 16: 1946 By the Window

Scene 16

1946--By the Window

A few days later. Fernando sits in Fela's livingroom. The lights are dim. The light of dusk is seen through the windows. Sarita enters. She wears the same dress as in the scene before. Fernando wears pants and a sweater.

SARITA

Fernando...

(*Pause.*)

Why do you sit in the dark?--Should I turn the light on?

FERNANDO

Oh, no. It's still light outside.

SARITA

Doesn't it bother you to sit in the dark?

(*Pause.*)

What do you think of when you sit like this?

FERNANDO

I don't think much. I rest.

SARITA

Won't you rest better lying down?

FERNANDO

No, I like to sit like this.

SARITA

When I see you sitting in the dark I think you're sad.

FERNANDO

Oh, no, I'm not.

SARITA

Do you doze off?

FERNANDO

No.

SARITA

What do you think about? Aren't you thinking anything?

FERNANDO

I imagine things.

SARITA

What?

FERNANDO

I imagine that things are peaceful. That people go to work, and come back from work, and they eat, and go to sleep.

SARITA

Is that what you think...?

FERNANDO

Yes.

SARITA

You are so dear.

FERNANDO

(*He looks out.*)

For many years I didn't think of the people here. I thought of my island--which was beautiful and peaceful. I sat here, but in my mind I was sitting on the porch in my parents' house. Do you do that? Do you spend time in a place that's far away?

SARITA

Yes.

FERNANDO

In my island nothing bad ever happened. A dog died once.

(*He looks out.*)

Then, it happened that I didn't think of my island any more. I thought of the people here. That's how I became an American. I thought of the people here. I imagined that you came from school and you did your homework and that you didn't get into fights in the street. Or go out with boys who were mean and disrespectful. That's how I became an American.

SARITA

I wish I could think like you. I think of many things, but never quiet things. My heart is restless and I think of things that hurt me. They frighten me. I feel pain in my chest. I am in danger. Teach me how to be like you. Teach me how to look for peace. My heart won't let me.

(*Lights fade to black. Music is heard.*)

Act 2, Scene 7: Author's Scene 17: 1947 The Key

Scene 17

1947--The Key

Sarita's kitchen. Mark sits at the kitchen table. He reads from a large textbook and makes notes on a yellow pad. There is the sound of a key. Mark looks toward the door. Then returns to his work. The door opens. Julio enters. Mark looks at him in a state of shock. Mark wears a shirt and pants. Julio wears a blue suit.

JULIO

I had this key here that I had to return. I didn't knock because I thought there was no one here,--and I thought I'd just leave it

on the table. I thought I'd just write a note on paper and say I had the key and I thought I'd drop it off. Because I shouldn't have a key that's not the key to my place.

(*He puts the key on the floor.*)

Say hello to Sara.--I haven't seen her in a while.--Bye now.

(*Julio exits. Mark stares at the open door. Lights fade to black. There is the sound of music.*)

Act 2, Scene 8: Author's Scene 18: 1947 Drinking

Scene 18

1947--Drinking

A few hours later. Mark sits with his head on the table. He is unconscious. There is a bottle of liquor and a shot glass on the table. Sarita enters. She is 21 years old. She starts to go to Mark, notices the key and picks it up. She is dejected. Mark and Sarita wear the same dress as when last seen. Lights fade to black. Music is heard.

Act 2, Scene 9: Author's Scene 19: 1947 Death Scene

Scene 19

1947--Death Scene

Three months later. Sarita's kitchen. Sarita sits. Julio is standing. She wears a slip. He is in his underwear.

JULIO

Hey, don't give me that. I need money. I have to eat. You don't want me to tell Mark--you give me some money. I'm not doing nothing wrong. So you like to hit the hay with me--so I have to eat. There's nothing wrong with that. Come on, baby. Let's do it. If you give me a few dollars I won't tell him. I need the money. Otherwise you can't eat. Don't give me that lady stuff. I know you ain't no lady.

(*He goes to kiss her. She takes a knife from the table and stabs him. He speaks as he begins to fall.*)

Hey, honey, what are you doing? Hey, hey, hey, hey, Baby baby. Hey, baby.

(*He holds on to her. They slide down to the floor. His head is on her lap. He is unconscious. She starts to sob. The rhythm of the song is set by her sobbing.*)

SARITA

(*She sings "Papi, No."*)

No...

No...

Don't leave me, Papi,

No...

Papito, no.

No, Papito, Papi.

No.

Don't leave me, Papi,

Papi, no.

Don't leave me, Papi,

Papi, no.

Ay, Papito.

Ay, Papito

Ay, Papito.

No.

I love you, Papi, Papo.
Don't die.
I love you, love you, Papo.

(*She takes money out of her bosom, both coins and bills, and puts it in his hands. She tries to open his eyes.*)

Mirame, Papi.
Look at me.
Look at me, Papi.
Look at me.

With your,
With your pretty eyes, Papi.
The way I like it.
The way I like you to look at me.

Shit, Papi, look at me.
No te mueras, caray.
Please, Papi don't die.
Please, Papi, Papi, don't die.
Ay, chico, coño.
Look at me.

Give me a kiss.

(*She kisses his lips.*)

Where is your little tongue?

(*She looks at him.*)

Shit, papi.
Papi, are you dead?

(*She sobs.*)

Ay...
Ay...

(*Pushing him away.*)

Get away from me.
Why are you doing this?

(*She sobs.*)

Ay, Papi.
Ay, Papi.

(*She sobs. Lights fade to black. Music is heard.*)

Act 2, Scene 10: Author's Scene 20: 1947 Mental Hospital

Scene 20

1947--Mental Hospital

Three months later. A sitting room in a mental hospital. Sarita and Fernando sit facing each other. Sarita wears a hospital robe. Fernando wears a suit.

SARITA

I feel better, Fernando, a lot better. The doctor said I am better, because now I remember what happened. It hurts a lot more to remember, but the doctor says it's better even if it hurts.

(She lowers her head.)

I am glad you came.

(Pause.)

How is Mami?

FERNANDO

She's fine.

SARITA

When is she coming?

FERNANDO

Tomorrow.

SARITA

I'll like to see her.

FERNANDO

She'll be here tomorrow.

SARITA

I miss her.

FERNANDO

She was here this morning.

SARITA

She was?

FERNANDO

You don't remember?

SARITA

(She thinks a while. She speaks softly.)

...I remember....

FERNANDO

She comes every morning.

SARITA

...She does?...

FERNANDO

Yes. And I come afternoons.

SARITA

Every afternoon?

FERNANDO

Yes.

(*Pause.*)

Melo wants to come too. He said to give you this.

(*He gives her a flower.*)

He said, "Give this to Mami, and tell her that I love her."

SARITA

(*She speaks as if in a trance.*)

Yesterday I spoke to him. He's very far. I called him collect. He said that Mami is growing tulips.

FERNANDO

Would you like to see him?

SARITA

No. I don't want him to come here. He'll cry. Mami cries all the time. He cries with her. She cries all the time and he also cries. He is too little to cry so much. That girl makes him cry.

FERNANDO

Who?

SARITA

Sara. Don't let her near him. She's going to hurt him. Don't let her hurt him. She has done enough harm.--It's this thing I have inside me. Something I cannot tear off. It is a bad growth that will not die.

FERNANDO

(*Takes wrapped chocolate from his pocket.*)

I brought you this.

(*Mark enters.*)

Mark is here. He came with me.

SARITA

Mark?

MARK

(He walks to her and kneels by her side.)

Hello Sara.

SARITA

Hello Mark. How are you?

(Mark sits on a chair.)

You came to see me?

(He nods.)

Even after what happened?

(He nods.)

I knew you were nice. I always knew it.

(Pause.)

What do you think will happen? What will they do to me?

(Mark and Sarita's hands lock with force as music is heard. Lights fade to black.)

END